

# **Animal Health Safeguarding Review Implementation Progress Report September 2002**

## **I. Progress achieved in implementing the review:**

### Surveillance

- Evaluating surveillance tools – An APHIS working group has been conducting a thorough evaluation of surveillance tools currently available for monitoring swine health. To date, the working group has completed the first phase of its evaluation of adult swine testing at slaughter. Recommendations have been developed for enhancing the usefulness of this surveillance tool. Other swine health surveillance tools will be evaluated and recommendations developed over the next six months. Safeguarding review recommendations #7, 8 and 9 call for ensuring that the surveillance system is capable of providing all needed information.
- Gathering international animal health information – International Services and Veterinary Services are collaborating on an initiative to improve the collection and availability of international animal health information for surveillance and risk analysis purposes. A web-based data entry portal and a list of information needs are being developed. Enhancing the collection of international animal health information was recommended in the Safeguarding Review (recommendation #89).
- Training offered on emerging animal health issue identification and analysis – Veterinary Services' Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health conducted a training course on the identification and analysis of emerging issues September 17-19<sup>th</sup>. Methods for the identification of issues were presented including various surveillance systems. In addition, tools and techniques for the assessment of animal health issues were presented and practiced. Course participants were from foreign governments, US government agencies (Federal and State), and private industry. Safeguarding Review recommendation 11 supported the exchange of ideas and personnel with other countries in surveillance methodology.

### Response

- Vaccine availability reviewed – September 16-18<sup>th</sup>, the International Association for Biologicals (IABs), the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), APHIS, and the Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics (IICAB) sponsored the *Vaccines for OIE List A and Emerging Animal Diseases Symposium*. The symposium drew participants from around the world with the primary purpose of reviewing the availability, safety, and efficacy of veterinary vaccines for OIE List A diseases and for selected emerging animal diseases. Information on current vaccines and research on vaccines under development was

presented along with the US decision tree for vaccine usage for foreign and emerging animal diseases. Safeguarding Review recommendation 112 called for the development of a vaccination strategy for foreign animal diseases.

- National animal health emergency response plan released - The second version of the National Animal Health Emergency Response Plan for an Outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease or Other Highly Contagious Animal Diseases (NAHERP) has been issued. This document is a coordinating document for the upcoming suite of Response Plan manuals and outlines the way that APHIS will work with States to coordinate the response to a multi-State outbreak of a highly contagious disease. The plan also identifies the functional support that other Federal agencies can provide to assist APHIS and the States. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations addressed the need for updated response guidelines (#s 107, 100).
- Joint US- Mexico meetings held to discuss emergency preparedness along the border – On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, representatives from Texas and Mexico met to discuss preparedness, develop response plans, and improve communications in the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak. This meeting was funded by an emergency preparedness grant from USDA. Representatives from Veterinary Services, International Services, the Texas Animal Health Commission, the Texas Department of Agriculture and State and Federal regulatory officials from Mexico City and the states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and Coahuila attended the meeting. Safeguarding Review recommendations #106 and 107 refer to the development of cooperative efforts and defining specific state/federal authorities and roles.
- Simulated Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak exercise – APHIS assisted the National Pork Board in conducting a simulated FMD outbreak exercise at the annual Lehman Swine Health Conference held September 15-17<sup>th</sup> in Minnesota. A group of private practitioners participated in an exercise to control and eradicate a simulated outbreak of FMD using a combination of mitigation tools. The Veterinary Services FMD Disease Spread Model was used to simulate the outbreak and impacts of control decisions.

#### Exclusion

- Collaborating internationally on disease issues – On September 3 and 4<sup>th</sup>, APHIS hosted the *International Response to Infectious Salmon Anemia: Prevention, Control, and Eradication Symposium*. Representatives from the US, Chile, Scotland, Canada and Norway made presentations on current international knowledge in applied research, laboratory diagnostics, management practices, and regulatory responses. APHIS International Services is working with the regional OIE office in Japan to sponsor a seminar on BSE for Southeast Asian countries. The seminar will be held in Malaysia in late October. Safeguarding Review

recommendation #48 encourages increased collaboration with foreign countries as a means of protecting the U.S. from foreign animal diseases.

- Keeping abreast of international developments on an early warning system – Members of Veterinary Services' Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health met with a representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to discuss an initiative FAO, OIE, and the World Health Organization (WHO) are pursuing to develop an international early warning system for animal health issues which will parallel a system already in place for public health issues. Safeguarding Review recommendation 92 called for APHIS' active participation in the FAO Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES).

#### Laboratory System

- Progress towards upgraded laboratory facilities – During the week of September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Steering Committee for the Ames Modernization Project toured several laboratories with functions/processes similar to the APHIS and ARS laboratories in Ames. These informative visits will aid in the planning and design process for the consolidated laboratory portion of the Modernization Plan. Additional access control has been implemented at current APHIS facilities in Ames to improve the security of the facilities. Safeguarding Review recommendations #18, 73, and 94 supported improving laboratory facilities.
- National Animal Health Laboratory Network developments – Completed work plans are being received from the initial participating laboratories and these plans will be reviewed by APHIS and CSREES. A conference call was held September 20<sup>th</sup> between Veterinary Services leadership and the AAVLD Executive Board to discuss the development of electronic communications for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations point toward the establishment of a national animal health laboratory system (#s 17, 74, and 121).

#### Veterinary Accreditation

- Drafting changes to the Code of Federal Regulations for the Veterinary Accreditation Program - Approval has been granted to begin drafting the regulatory changes needed to enact the revised veterinary accreditation program. Safeguarding Review recommendations #s145, 146 and 147 call for revisions to the veterinary accreditation program.

#### Information Technology

- Generic Database Release – A new release of the Generic Database (GDB) was provided to 10 pilot states. This release addresses key issues identified by States in the areas of data input speed and report availability. A release of this version to

all states will begin the week of October 14<sup>th</sup> pending input from the pilot states. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations support improving data management systems (#s 3, 127, 130).

## **II. Implementation activities:**

The Coordinated Response Issue Group met the week of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Action plans were drafted at this meeting. Another meeting of the issue group is planned for the week of December 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Surveillance Issue Group will be meeting November 5-7<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting the issue group will be identifying an overall implementation sequence including linkages and dependencies along with completing work on action plans for a number of safeguarding review recommendations.

Members of the Veterinary Accreditation Issue Group attended the first of two focus groups to be held on veterinary accreditation education and training. The session was held in Riverdale the week of September 9<sup>th</sup>.